



SCAM ALERT

DON'T GET RIPPED OFF FOR UNNEEDED SERVICE

If you receive a letter from any company offering to lower property taxes on your home, don't be fooled. While these letters appear official, they did not come from any government agency. You never have to pay for a review of your property's value. The Los Angeles County Assessor's Office does it free of charge. Decline-in-value reassessment Proposition 8 applications are easy to complete and can be downloaded from the Assessor's website at assessor.lacounty.gov or by calling (888) 807-2111. Here are the facts:

- Companies are sending mailings to property owners offering services to lower their property taxes. Some of these solicitation letters look official—they appear to be from the State of California or the Assessor's Office; also they may have bar codes and the County Assessor ID number.
- **The County of Los Angeles does not approve or endorse these services.**
- Companies offering to lower your property taxes must clearly show they are not a government agency and no government agency approves or endorses their services. Failure to do so is a violation of California law. If you or someone you know receives an illegal request, file a complaint with the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs Real Estate Fraud and Information Program at (800) 973-3370.
- These companies may charge hundreds of dollars for a reduction in value and even impose a late fee if they receive the application after a certain date. Don't be misled into paying someone to file an application for you when you can apply for a decline in value for free with the Los Angeles County Assessor's Office.
- This review is permitted under Proposition 8 which allows a temporary reduction in assessed value when the current market value of a property is less than the value shown on the property tax bill. The assessed value of property is established when it is either purchased or built—this is called the Proposition 13 value. Owners who purchased their home or condominium at or near the top of the market may have a Proposition 13 value which is higher than its market value.
- The Los Angeles County Assessor has initiated a review of approximately 500,000 single-family residences and condos purchased between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2008 to determine if there is a decline in value. The owners of the approximately 500,000 homes reviewed will receive a letter by the end of June notifying them of the results. After April 1, you can find out if your home was included in the review at the Assessor's website at assessor.lacounty.gov.
- Owners who disagree with the results of the review or who were not included may file an application through December 31. Additionally, owners who disagree with the value may file with the independent Assessment Appeals Board between July 2 and November 30.